

Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

DRC-01 /144 W

----- 081454

R 100315Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7390

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MINISTER LABOUR WATT HAS INDICATED HE WILL RESIGN PORTFOLIO WHEN HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED CERTAIN OBJECTIVES. RESIGNATION NOT EXPECTED UNTIL EARLY 1974. LIKELY SUCCESSOR IS MINISTER STATE SERVICES TIZARD. END SUMMARY.

2. MINLAB WATT, UNDER FIRE FROM EMPLOYERS AND INDEPENDENT STOREMEN AND PACKERS UNION FOR DETERMINING NOVEMBER 27 THAT WATERSIDE (DOCK) WORKERS WOULD BE ALLOWED WORK IN TWO OFF-WHARF CONTAINER DEPOTS, NOW QUOTED AS SAYING HE WILL RESIGN PORTFOLIO "WHEN I ACHIEVE THE THINGS I WANT TO ACHIEVE". OBJECTIVES LISTED BY WATT ARE RATHER BROAD DESIRE TO SEE IMPROVEMENTS IN AND TIGHTENING UP OF DEPT. LABOR. QUERIED BY EMBOFF CONCERNING WHAT HE KNEW ABOUT WATT'S OBJECTIVES, SECRETARY LABOUR DAVEY REPLIED THAT IF THERE WERE ANY THEY WERE BEING KEPT SECRET FROM HIM. DAVEY'S

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REGARD FOR HIS MINISTER (NEVER HIGH) NOW SINKING

TO OUT-OF-SIGHT LEVEL.

3. RUMORS OF WATT'S RESIGNATION HAVE BEEN CURRENT IN WELLINGTON FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. IN ADDITION TO LABOR PORTFOLIO HE ALSO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WORKS. NET RESULT IS THAT HE HEAVILY OVERWORKED AND UNABLE GIVE SUFFICIENT TIME AND ATTENTION TO PROBLEM AREAS. DECISIONS OFTEN REFLECT ADVICE OF LAST INDIVIDUAL WHO TALKED TO HIM. CONTAINER DECISION MADE ALMOST ENTIRELY FOR SHORT TERM POLITICAL GAIN AND (LIKE MANY OTHERS) HAS UNFAVORABLE LONG TERM DRAW-BACKS. ALTHOUGH HIGHLY PAID DOCK WORKERS HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL ACCEPT SOTREMEN'S WAGES TO BEGIN WITH, THEY EXPECT TO NEGOTIATE A NEW CONTRACT IN NEAR FUTURE. PAYING HIGHER RATES TO DOCK-WORKERS-TURNED-SOTREMEN ALMOST CERTAIN TO TRIGGER MAJOR ROUND OF WAGE DEMANDS AS KIWI WORKERS INVOKE SACRED PRINCIPLE OF WAGE RELATIVITY. SIMILAR SITUATION DURING JUNE-JULY 1973 RESULTED IN GNZ'S BRINGING DOWN 8.5 PERCENT G*/ MAFVVZCZ

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR OBJECTIVES, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, LONGSHOREMEN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973WELLIN03204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731233/aaaaaydq.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 17 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <13-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: ELAB, NZ, (WATT, HUGH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005